

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 SS-15 EUR-12 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 /068 W
-----018160 050355Z /12
R 050150Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7129
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, SOCI, CB
SUBJECT: REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN DEMOCRATIC
KAMPUCHEA

REF: (A) STATE 157953 (B) BANGKOK 17849 (C) BANGKOK 18288

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS AN INTERVIEW OF A CAMBODIAN REFUGEE, SOURCE T, NAME: LON HEOU. (NAME MAY BE USED IN USG DOCUMENTATION FOR UNHRC.) INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED IN PRASAT, SURIN, JUNE 16, 1978.
2. LON HEOU, 21, CAME FROM KOUKMON, ODDAR MEANCHEY PROVINCE, WITH HER HUSBAND SI SUOT (SOURCE S). THEY ARRIVED IN THAILAND IN FEBRUARY, 1978. HER ACCOUNT FOLLOWS:
3. CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA QTE WE HAD HARD RICE, NOT GRUEL, TO EAT IN KOUKMON, BUT NOT ENOUGH. WE HAD NO FISH OR MEAT BUT STRIPS OF BANANA TREE TRUNKS WERE MIXED WITH THE RICE. IN 1975, IT WAS MUCH BETTER THAN 1976-78.
4. QTE AS A CHILD, I LIVED IN THE SAME VILLAGE AS MY FUTURE HUSBAND SI SUOT. IN KOUKMON, WE WORKED IN

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DIFFERENT UNITS. I WORKED IN BENG. I WAS VERYLUCKY TO MARRY SOMEONE I KNEW AND LIKED. MANY OTHERS WERE NOT SO LUCKY AND FREQUENTLY DID NOT KNOW EACH OTHER BEFORE GETTING MARRIED.

5. QTE THE WOMEN WORKED JUST LIKE THE MEN IN OUR VILLAGE. WE DUG CANALS, BUILT DAMS AND PLANTED RICE. JUST BEFORE

FLEEING TO THAILAND, I WORKED CLEARING LAND. EARLIER, AFTER I WAS PREGNANT, I CARRIED LOGS TO BUILD RAIL FENCES. I HAD TO DO THIS WORK UNTIL MY NINTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY. IF WAS PHYSICALLY DIFFICULT TO PICK UP THE LOGS, AND SOMETIMES I HAD TO ASK FOR HELP FROM SOMEONE JUST TO LIFT THE LOGS. I WAS TOO TERRIFIED OF WHAT MIGHT BE DONE TO ME TO ASK TO REST OR FOR LIGHTER WORK, EVEN WHEN I WAS SICK. I HAD A MISCARRIAGE NEAR THE END OF MY PREGNANCY. AFTER THE MISCARRIAGE, I GOT VERY SICK. I GOT TEN DAYS OFF IN THE HOSPITAL. THE DOCTOR GAVE ME INJECTIONS OF SYRUP AND THEY "SMOKED" ME FOR TWO DAYS, THE WAY YOU SMOKE A PIG. IN THE HOSPITAL I SLEPT ON THE GROUND. MY HUSBAND WAS ALLOWED TO VISIT ME ONE TIME. THE REST OF THE TIME MY MOTHER-IN-LAW CAME TO VISIT ME. AFTER TEN DAYS IN THE HOSPITAL, I WAS PUT TO WORK IN THE COMMUNAL KITCHEN. THAT WORK WAS HARDER THAN CARRYING LOGS, SINCE I HAD TO LIFT HEAVY SACKS OF RICE PREPARING FOOD FOR 200 PEOPLE. I CONTINUED TO BE SICK, BUT EVERYONE IS SICK, EITHER SKINNY OR SWOLLEN. NO ONE IS WELL FED OR HEALTHY.

6. QTE FAR FEWER WOMEN THAN MEN ESCAPE TO THAILAND, BECAUSE THE WOMEN ARE AFRAID THAT THEY WILL NOT MAKE IT. THEY ALSO HAVE CHILDREN AND CANNOT EXPECT TO FLEE SUCCESSFULLY. THE KHMER ROUGE SPREAD RUMORS THAT ALL WHO TRY TO ESCAPE ARE KILLED. I HAVE ALSO HEARD THAT THE BORDERS HAVE MINE FIELDS.
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7. QTE OLD WOMEN ARE EMPLOYED TO LOOK AFTER ONE TO TEN SMALL CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNAL KITCHENS. OLD WOMEN ARE VERY UNHAPPY AND ARE TREATED VERY BADLY. THEY ARE AFRAID TO LOOK AFTER SO MANY CHILDREN. THERE IS NO TIME TO CHEW BETEL. AND, IF THE CHILDREN CRY, THEY CANNOT CALL THEIR MOTHERS.

8. QTE OTHER OLD WOMEN HAD TO HELP CLEAR LAND OR RAISE SILK WORMS. THEY MAKE SILK CLOTH, WHITE ONLY, BUT IT IS TAKEN AWAY BY THE KHMER ROUGE.

9. EXECUTIONS QTE MY HUSBAND SI SUOT THOUGHT OF FLEEING FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, BUT THEN WE WOULD THINK THAT WE COULD STAY AND MAYBE THINGS WOULD GET BETTER. THEN THEY STARTED KILLING OUR RELATIVES. MY FATHER FLED IN MID-1977 AND AFTERWARD I WAS TREATED LIKE THE "DAUGHTER OF AN ENEMY." MY SISTER, LON KIM HEAT, STUDIED SEVEN YEARS BEFORE 1975, MORE THAN MOST GIRLS. IN LATE 1977, SHE WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM THE MOBILE YOUTH GROUP AND EXECUTED. FRIENDS IN THE YOUTH GROUP TOLD ME LATER.

10. QTE OVER ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE FROM MY VILLAGE HAVE BEEN

EXECUTED. LAST YEAR SIXTY WERE KILLED EITHER IN THE VILLAGE OR WERE TAKEN TO THE FOREST AND KILLED. SOME WERE FORMER SOLDIERS; OTHERS HAD DONE NOTHING.

11. QTE IF YOU TALK TOO MUCH OR DON'T TALK AT ALL, YOU ARE IN DANGER OF BEING "TAKEN AWAY." NO ONE DARES MAKE JOKES OR EVEN LAUGH. ONE GUY IN MY VILLAGE WAS EXECUTED BECAUSE HE WAS "TOO JOVIAL." COMPLACENCY IS A CRIME, SINCE A COMPLACENT PERSON IS LIABLE NOT TO WORK TO HARD AND BE A BAD EXAMPLE. YOU MIGHT FORGET TO WORK*

12. QTE IN GENERAL THE RATE OF KILLING MEN IS MUCH GREATER THAN FOR WOMEN. I THINK CAMBODIA IS GOING TO BE A COUNTRY ONLY OF WOMEN.
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13. HUMAN, CIVIAL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS QTE THERE ARE NO RIGHTS IN CAMBODIA, NOT EVEN THE RIGHT TO SMILE. I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE REMAINED IN CAMBODIA, BUT I COULD NOT ENDURE SUCH A LIFE. I WANTED JUST A LITTLE BIT OF FREEDOM, TO BE HAPPY AGAIN, AND TO HAVE ENOUGH TO EAT.

14. QTE I HAVE NEVER HEARD OF A WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT, BUT IN CAMBODIA, IT IS SAID THAT MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL. IT IS TRUE THAT WE HAVE EQUAL WORK, ARE EQUAL IN BEING UNHAPPY, EQUAL IN NOT HAVING ENOUGH TO EAT, BUT THESE ARE EQUALITIES I DO NOT WANT.
O'DONOHUE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, VIOLATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO18891
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DECONTROLLED PER 7/7/78 MEMO FROM EA/VLC - JUDITH R. JOHNSON
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780275-0487
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780797/aaaaddho.tel
Line Count: 150
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5cb67c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 157953, 78 BANGKOK 17849, 78 BANGKOK 18288
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2120488
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA
TAGS: SHUM, SOCI, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5cb67c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014